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JACOB EPSTEIN, SCULPTOR.

London, May 16, 1917.

To have aroused in England in wartime an interest which might even justify the title of an excitement, would seem to betoken in the world of art the advent of an artist of more than common talent. This distinction belongs to the Polish sculptor, Jacob Epstein, whose works are at present drawing all London to the unpretentious little gallery of Leicester Square where some 26 bronzes and plaster casts, mostly portrait studies, reveal the latest stage at which this man of many phases has arrived. To the English race sculpture would as a rule appear to make a less direct appeal than painting and its enthusiastic acclaim of a new light in regard to this art must therefore indicate qualities of an unusual order. What these qualities are it is by no means easy to define for both critics and public differ among themselves as to what is admirable and what is defective, that which is lauded by one section, being frequently condemned by another. But when all has been said, it is agreed that there has been no more stimulating event in the artistic world since the advent of Mestrovic into our midst a couple of years ago.

Curiously enough, despite the various experiments in sculpture which Epstein has made, each has been somewhat in the nature of a surprise and it can hardly be claimed that any has been the logical sequence of the other. Herein no doubt lies his weakness—or perhaps his strength? The present exhibition, if we except two items to which I shall refer later is less in the nature of a challenge than has been the case at his previous shows. One hardly recognizes in it the sculptor of the Oscar Wilde Monument or of those figures above the Medical Hall which aroused such virulent criticism in the early days of his development. One sees rather a man of ultra-modernity modifying accepted laws to suit his own individual vision and using every artifice invented from archaic times down to the present to heighten the extreme expressiveness of his technique. Thus his portrait busts become something more than mere representations, something more than criticisms in metal and stone, they become types suggestive of racial forces speaking through the individual, abstractions that are eloquent of life as he sees it today, a sort of philosophical rendering of the experiences which belong to himself and the world around him.

Sculptors' Portrait Busts.

The portrait bust reproduced in this issue is that of Augustus John, the artist who may be said to be exercising the same influence in painting as Epstein is wielding in sculpture. It is shown at the Leicester Galleries in plaster, and it is interesting to contrast it with the bust of Admiral Fisher in bronze. The John head is no less virile, no less arresting in its force and intensity, but it is the head of a man who has not yet completely "arrived," from whose gifts something has been missed; the head of

Fisher on the other hand suggests accomplishment almost to the verge of caricature, a realization of the man's individuality which has inspired the sculptor even to the point of over-emphasis.

It has been the fashion to label Epstein "unhealthy," and to find much that is degenerate in his work. I must confess, however, that in his latest achievements, such defects would have to be very carefully sought for. Although in the portraits of the women, there is a certain restlessness, a distinct dissatisfaction, which reflects but ill upon modern conditions, it would be unfair to speak of them as being imbued with any feeling of degeneracy. The beauty of Epstein's technique shows itself particularly forcibly in these heads, and in each he seems to bring to bear a style completely differing from the rest. One is severe, restrained, another fantastic, intriguing, a third sheerly realistic, a fourth elusive in its subtlety, as if the artist were bent upon displaying his versatility and his command of technique.

But there is an Epstein whom I find it difficult to take quite seriously; it is the Epstein of the marble "Venus," and the granite "Mother and Child." These typify a return to the days when the sculptor, after submitting himself to the influence of the art of the Ancient Egyptians and Assyrians, found his inspiration in the products of the South Sea Islanders and of the negroid races. I have no doubt that the critics who profess to discover profound and symbolical truths in these pieces are sincere in their protestations, but to me they are entirely wanting in expressiveness, and I can see nothing but distortion in their line and mass. I have even a shrewd idea that the sculptor may be playing a freakish game in them in order to see how far he can baffle criticism, for which I am convinced he has very little respect.

If they are on the other hand, frank experiments, it is possible that they may prove but an intermediate stage in the attainment of a goal and that the art which has created them but imperfectly may ultimately express itself in a more concise and convincing manner. That Epstein has yet completely found himself or even realized his own powers cannot be contended. Herein lies perhaps the greatest hope, for he represents one of the most powerful forces in the latter-day world of art and if this force be but fully developed, and along the best lines, it is impossible to predict what may lie in store.

L. G. S.

WASHINGTON.

At the Veerhoff Galleries Mrs. Bertha Lum is showing a collection of wood block prints mostly of Japanese subjects done with much delicacy. Mrs. Lum like Helen Hyde has lived many years in Japan and while losing nothing of her personality, has absorbed much of the native skill.

An exhibition of wild fowl shooting and other sporting subjects by Frank W. Benson is now on at the Dayton Galleries.

The Gardiner Greene Hubbard National Collection is now on view at the Library of Congress. This constitutes several hundred etchings, aquatints and lithographs recently purchased for the collection through the Hubbard purchase fund and includes the works of artists of all periods and nationalities. There is arranged in the center of this Pavilion of the Library a valuable technical exhibit showing the various methods of etching and engraving. C. C. C.

ART BOOK REVIEW.

PAUL MANSHIP—A Critical Essay on His Sculpture and an Iconography, by A. E. Gallatin. John Lane Co., N. Y.

Mr. Gallatin's monograph on Paul Manship is well designated by the author, "a critical essay," for in this short study devoted to the sculptor, his career, methods, inspirations and achievements are passed in review in masterly fashion, and his place among modern artists well defined. Mr. Gallatin notes the influence on his genius of his early studies of the work of Michelangelo and Donatello, and of Hellenic art—"the purest of all fountain heads," as also, later on, of the art of India, and he applies to Mr. Manship, Sir Joshua Reynolds' assertion, "that the more extensive your acquaintance is with the works of those who have excelled, the more extensive will be your power of invention." The passing influence of Rodin is also commented on, and the final judgment dwells on the perfection of craftsmanship that characterizes the sculptor's work.

The Iconography following the essay, and the eight plates grouped at the end of the little volume, are valuable additions.

TORONTO.

The fourth annual exhibition of the Canadian etchers is on at the Art Museum of the Grange. To those who are enthusiastic about etchings in the various processes, the exhibit is of especial interest—for to the colored aquatint, which is such a favorite with all—has been added the one tone aquatint, which brings out the half-tones for the middle distance in a landscape etching so well. One of the latest artists showing specimens in that style is Mrs. A. Dickson Patterson. Her mezzotints and colored aquatints are also worthy of special attention. An aquatint of the Statue of Victory, bearing her signature, appeared in a recent number of The Studio.

The plate as well as a proof and finished etching of the Buffalo Historical Museum by F. W. Jopling is of special interest and is one of the best examples of dry-point etching. Mr. Jopling also has a beautiful mezzotint of the "Whirlpool Rapids," illuminated. John Cotton is well represented in colored aquatints and line etchings, as well as mezzotints. Eugene Beaupre depicts child life very charmingly in line etching. W. R. Stark has adopted birds as well as animals as subjects for his lovely colored aquatints. F. W. Netherland has examples of word engraving, and C. W. Simpson dry-point etchings. Herbert Raue's work is, as usual, of the highest standard—and is always the most interesting work of the exhibition. George Fawcett has some fine etchings of Winnipeg. H. Ivan Neilson shows line etchings of different parts of Quebec.

Lyeth Russell, R. B. A., and Lewis E. Smith of London, show some beautiful etchings of English scenery. Owen Staples has an interesting line etching of the Quebec market; William J. Thompson, T. J. Green, Clarence Japson, W. J. Phillips, Ernest Fosbery, James Crockart, William J. Wood, W. W. Alexander and Dorothy Stevens are all well represented in their different styles of etching.

Four demonstrations of different styles of etching were arranged for each Saturday.

Through the courtesy of the Curator of the Grange space has not been lacking this year for the fine large exhibit of photographs assembled from many and various countries. The lighting is good and the exhibits are well placed. The gold medal was awarded to Mr. James W. Doolittle of San Francisco, for his girls head. It must have been a difficult task for the jury of selection to make the award for this gold medal when the work was all so excellent. The jury was composed of G. A. Reid, Principal of Ontario College of Art, C. M. Manley, Capt. S. I. Bartlett and Charles Aylett.

MUSEUM ASS'N MEETING.

How to increase the practical usefulness of museums was the chief topic at the twelfth annual meeting of the American Association of Museums, which was in session here this week. Members of the staffs of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the American Museum of Natural History led in the discussion of this subject.

The first session Monday was held at the American Museum of Natural History, with Henry R. Rowland, director of the association, presiding. Among the papers read were two on the training of museum workers by Miss Edith R. Abbott and Homer R. Dill. Tuesday's sessions took place at the Metropolitan Museum, with Robert W. deForest presiding in the morning and Edward Robinson, the director, in the afternoon. Display in museums and the relation of the museum to the producer were the chief topics discussed. Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer talked on "The Visitors' Point of View," W. Frank Purdy on "Gallery Arrangement," and Thomas E. Kirby, of the American Art Association on "The Art Market." In the evening, Dr. C. H. Townsend, of the New York Aquarium conducted an inspection of that institution and spoke on its administration.

Other topics were taken up at the Natural History Museum, Thursday, when Miss Delia I. Griffin talked on "Americanization Through Drama with the Aid of Museums," and Dr. G. Clyde Fisher demonstrated "The Pedagogy of Motion Pictures." The formal sessions ended Thursday night, with Friday and Saturday devoted to visits to other New York museums.

William J. Baer, is exhibiting eighteen of his oils, and two cases of miniatures at the East Orange Public Library, East Orange, N. J.

The exhibition is particularly appropriate, since Mr. Baer lives in East Orange, although he maintains his studio in N. Y.

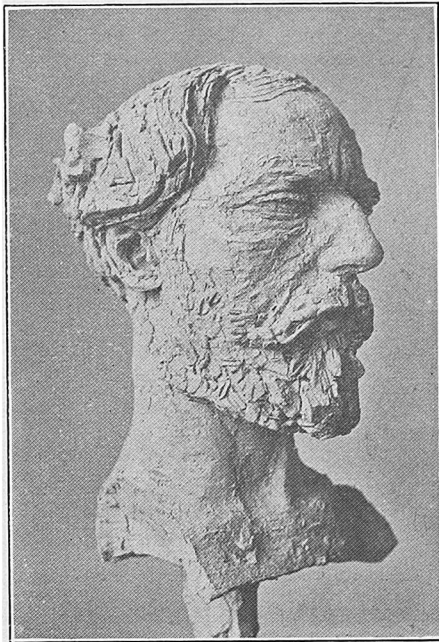
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AUGUSTUS E. JOHN

By Jacob Epstein

Memorial to Southern Soldiers.

Work on the Stone Mountain (Georgia) monument to Confederate soldiers has started. Steps have already been constructed down the side of the mountain to the points where the monument is to be carved. There will be eleven flights of steps, each flight ending in a platform, and the final flight, 400 feet above the ground, will have an immense platform, strong enough to support heavy machinery. This will form the base for the workers where the carving of the monument will begin. It is stated that the 17,000 feet of lumber which are to be used for the construction of these steps have been hauled up the mountain-side by oxen.

A cable car, swung from the highest platform, will enable the workmen to reach any point desired, and all the figures in the monument will be carved from this suspended car. In the first place, the figures will be painted on the mountain side by the sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, who originated the project of this gigantic monument. These will then be blocked out by the stone cutters, and Mr. Borglum will give the finishing touches to the work.

The most noted Confederate generals will be depicted in the foreground, these figures measuring 50 feet, or more, in height. The most famous, Lee and Jackson, will be represented on horseback.

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